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Contact:

Kelly Ferrara
(314) 991-4641 x113
Cell (314) 799-1573

**Missouri Task Force Wraps up Meetings for Improving State
Emergency Response System**

Members of state's Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force hold their final meeting to develop plan for improved stroke and heart attack emergency response system

Jefferson City, MO (March 17, 2008) – The Missouri Foundation for Health and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Time Critical Diagnosis (TCD) Task Force will hold its fifth and final meeting in Jefferson City, Tuesday, March 18.

The task force, which first met on January 15, is based on the concept medical professionals refer to as a “time critical diagnosis.” Since the first meeting, more than 100 doctors, advocacy groups, hospital administrators, first responders and medical organizations across Missouri have come together to develop recommendations for a statewide emergency response system for victims of stroke and ST-Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI), a form of heart attack.

Stroke and heart attack make up two of the top three causes of death in the state. When a Missouri resident suffers a stroke or STEMI, their survival and recovery directly depends on the time it takes for them to receive treatment. Missouri, however, does not have a statewide system to provide these patients their treatment in the timeliest manner. This is why the task force is dedicated to creating a system that ensures these two time critical ailments are treated timely, efficiently and effectively.

“Stroke and STEMI sufferers share the need for a time critical diagnosis in order to save lives and achieve optimal recovery,” explained Dr. William Jermyn, the EMS medical director for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. “The members of this task force have dedicated considerable time and resources to this process because we all recognize a new system will positively impact every community across Missouri.”

During the five meetings this year, the task force members have pooled their expertise and discussed the unique needs of stroke and STEMI sufferers, and have worked extensively to develop an ideal system to address those needs. They will make their final recommendations for a state-wide stroke and STEMI emergency medical care system to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services this summer. The ultimate goal of the system is to provide patients across Missouri with the right care, at the right place, in the right amount of time.

“While much work still needs to be done to ensure these goals and recommendations become a reality, we are all very proud of reaching this milestone,” Dr. Jermyn added. “We hope this process and the subsequent recommendations will become a model for states across the country to improve their own emergency response systems.”

The Task Force’s next meeting will be held Tuesday, March 18, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. at the State Public Health Lab in Jefferson City.

***About DHSS:** The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services protects and promotes quality of life and health for all Missourians by developing and implementing programs and systems that provide: information and education, effective regulation and oversight, quality services and surveillance of diseases and conditions.*

***About MFH:** Established in 2000, MFH is the largest non-governmental funder of community health activities in the state. It is dedicated to serving the uninsured, underinsured and underserved in 84 Missouri counties and the City of St. Louis. For more information about MFH, visit www.mffh.org.*

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Editors Note: The Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force is made up of state-wide Missouri stakeholders and participants from your area are available for interview. For more information on your area’s stakeholders, please contact Kelly Ferrara at (314) 991-4641 x113 or (314) 799-1573.

Attachments: The 360^o/365 Emergency Medical Care System “Circle Diagram.” The diagram illustrates TCD Task Force’s ideal of a system that delivers patients the right care, at the right place, in the right amount of time. For more information, visit the project Web site at www.360365.org.